

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, July 13, 2011

CONTACT: MARA LEE

(202) 225-7163

Congresswoman Matsui Introduces Spectrum Bill That Encourages Innovation

Legislation Will Preserve Unlicensed Spectrum for Innovation in Technology Sector, Support Wi-Fi Enabled Devices

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-CA), Co-Chair of the High Tech Caucus, and a Member of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Communications and Technology, introduced the [Spectrum for Innovation Act](#), legislation that would require the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) to carefully study the need and potential for allocating additional spectrum at 5GHz to the technology industry to support the growing demand for Wi-Fi. This bill will increase innovation and development in the technology industry by allowing new uses of this unlicensed spectrum.

“Supporting innovation in our growing industries will further our economic recovery and ensure our future competitiveness,” said Congresswoman Matsui. “The type of research and development that the access to spectrum would spur is essential in keeping our country and our economy moving forward. In contrast, attempts to auction off this spectrum would put U.S. innovators at a disadvantage.”

The 5GHz of unlicensed spectrum is currently shared with unlicensed devices, including the Wi-Fi enabled devices that have become increasingly important and a near-ubiquitous presence in our everyday lives. The last spectrum allocation to unlicensed devices in this band occurred in 2003, when the FCC approved additional frequencies for shared use with government systems. Such devices must be certified by the FCC to ensure that they do not interfere with government systems. Since that time, however, the devices that use spectrum have changed dramatically, and today, devices use broad channels to deliver very high speed broadband.

Studies have shown that wireless networks are increasingly relying on Wi-Fi connectivity to help meet carriers' spectrum demands. In addition, the annual consumer surplus generated by Wi-Fi in homes in the United States have been estimated at between \$4.3 and \$12.6 billion. The Wi-Fi industry is primarily American based companies and small businesses. Allowing the technology industry to continue to have access to this unlicensed spectrum will help support the growing demand for Wi-Fi, and allow American innovators to develop next-generation devices.

"By 2015, there will be an estimated 2 billion networked devices, up from 1 billion just last year, and most will require Wi-Fi connectivity. It's not just smartphones that will continue to require Wi-Fi – it's video conferencing devices that allow business deals to occur thousands of miles apart, health care technologies that allow for improved outcomes, and education tools that allow for interactive learning," added Matsui.

"Wi-Fi is already an integral part of our everyday lives; we must meet current demand and put in place a plan to meet growing needs," Matsui continued. "Moreover, technology is ever-evolving: what is new today may not be new tomorrow. It is our responsibility to ensure that the U.S. continues to be the center for innovation and technology; we must be able to support the next big thing."

#